

THE NEW ROYAL EXCHANGE.

SIR,—I feel extremely obliged to "The Writer in the *Morning Herald*" for pointing out the blunder which I had the misfortune to make relative to the name of the publication mentioned in my letter—it was the more unfortunate arising solely through carelessness; the fact is, that my letter was written several days after I had seen the *Herald*, and writing from memory alone, I by some means made the mistake in the name. When I looked over my letter in *THE BUILDER*, I immediately discovered it, but supposing some remarks would be made on the subject by your correspondents, I deferred mentioning it till I should have occasion to write again.

It appears to me that "The Writer in the *Herald*" has not strengthened his position by the explanation he has given; there is not one word in his letter in support of his approbation of the Exchange, and the very faults which I pointed out as derogating from the value of his remarks, he has confessed. He writes, "It was required of me to make it as popular in tone and as free from technicalities as possible; besides all which, it was necessary that it should not appear to contradict what had been said in the same paper but a few days before on the subject of the building." Now what a prostitution of criticism is this, and what dependence can be placed on the opinions of a writer who, to join in a ready-made opinion, is obliged to bolster up the reputation of a building by passing over its numerous defects of taste, ascribing to it merits which it does not possess, and all for the purpose of making his criticism as palatable as possible to those competent judges of architecture—the public? But the writer evidently thinks this going too far, and adds, "Yet it must not therefore be imagined that I spoke contrary to my opinion, that I was equally ready to condemn or approve, as might be required of me; more minute examination of the whole structure than I have yet had the opportunity of making, and to judge of its anatomy, plans, and sections, would be requisite, and may probably induce me to qualify some of my observations, which were intended to be, and no doubt have been received as chiefly expressing general impressions." It is some time since I have seen any thing so *mal-a-propos* as this, and I have yet to learn that it is necessary, before a judgment could be offered on the external effect of a building, to study the internal arrangement; or will the writer advance further in his *reductio ad absurdum*, and attempt to maintain that a critic cannot express a competent opinion on the external appearance of the Exchange without examining "its anatomy, plans, and sections?" If so, it falsifies his own remarks, for he admits he has not yet had an opportunity of doing so. He further considers me "partial," and "disposed to decry the building." I objected to the style employed for reasons which I gave, and I pointed out what seemed to me defects in the composition; rather would it have been more satisfactory to your readers had he pointed out some of the "admirable beauties" of the portion to the Exchange. The *onus probandi* lies with him, and he will excuse me for not placing much reliance on the mere assertion of a writer, although connected with the *Herald*; and I must contend that a writer who lauds the Exchange merely to please the public taste, together with the fulsome flattery with which his criticism was so plentifully besprinkled, can have the charge of favouritism for Mr. Tite imputed to him; and that the fact of ascribing merit to the Exchange does "argue for the superior genius" of the architect.

I will take the present opportunity to make an observation on the note you added to my letter; you have, I think, mistaken the meaning of my remark, "that columns" in the Italian style "are seldom fluted." It was my intention to have conveyed the idea that one radical fault of that style was, that the entablature (with the exception of the frieze) was invariably overloaded with enrichments, while the columns were seldom fluted; this is faulty for a two-fold reason; the first being that the eye is offended by the abrupt change from bareness to ornament; and the second, that the expense incurred by enriching the cornice to so great an extent would be more effectively employed by fluting the columns and lessening the mass of ornament above, thus producing a more subdued and pleasing

richness. My observation applied to external columns only, the inner ones being unfluted, carries with it its own reason; by their different aspect they avoid the confusion which would inevitably follow were they fluted, besides which they contribute materially to picturesque effect. And I still remain of opinion that it materially injures the effect of the Italian style, that in composition columns are seldom fluted; neither can I admit that fluting gives a heavy appearance to a column; on the contrary, they are used principally to remove the bare appearance an unfluted column, in many situations, possesses; and I think it bespeaks little for the impartiality with which "the writer in the *Herald*" read my letter, though he chimes in so admirably with you.*

I ought here to break off my remarks, and give place to some one else; before I put down my pen I will trespass on your pages a short space further, and notice the letter of "T." in the last number of *THE BUILDER*, on architectural competition. He is certainly in error when he supposes that "much has been written in your paper against architectural competition;" undoubtedly much has been written against the *abuse* of competition, but he will find the majority of letters refer to the unfair, unjust, and partial decisions of committees. That "enlightened committees" cannot be found is manifest to every one connected with architecture, and it is pure nonsense to talk of selecting an "impartial architect;" such a method leaves most of the grievances untouched. Hardly would an architect commit himself by selecting a design with glaring faults; yet it is not to be supposed that Sir Robert Smirk (I mention the name as an illustration and not individually), if placed in such a position, would choose a design if the originality and genius displayed might seem to clash with his professional reputation at the British Museum or elsewhere; and another and more serious objection is, that an opportunity for jobbing would still remain. Competitions are allowed by most architects, when conducted upon fair and honourable principles, to produce beneficial effect, by drawing out talent in young architects which would otherwise lie dormant; but I will give credit to an architect for something more than *enthusiasm*, if he supposes it possible to raise himself to honour in his profession, with the advertisement in the last *BUILDER*, and others of the same class, constantly before him. This advertisement says, "the name and address of the author of each plan to be written on its right-hand corner;" this looks very suspicious, but it is surpassed by the continuation, which says, "the author of the plan considered the best by the Committee of Works will be selected to execute the work on his giving satisfactory references, and finding adequate security not to exceed his estimate." Truly, the Committee for Baths and Wash-houses have at the onset shewn a desire to wash their hands of anything like the suspicion of making a job of their building; and perhaps they wanted to cleanse the profession of that feeling of importance which architects are so liable to consider their time worth, which induced them to offer no premiums. Very bright is the prospect for the aspiring architect, "though his noble ideas" may be occasionally damped by a wet blanket, in the shape of satisfactory references, adequate security, and no premium. I have no doubt that a large number of designs will be sent in; the authors, I cannot suppose expect to obtain the honour, and I do hope the profession generally will express their disapprobation by refusing to be made the tools of the committee; they may depend they will save money by it, and it may prove beneficial hereafter.—I remain, yours, &c.,

SCRUTATOR.

London, Nov. 25th, 1844.

OXFORD IMPROVEMENTS.—The President and Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford, have determined on the erection, contiguous to the college, of a new choristers' school and masters' house attached.

* [Our correspondent does not shew himself in this matter to be a master of architectural optics. We know for certainty that upright flutings do make the shafts of columns appear considerably thicker, and that spiral flutings make them appear considerably thinner. We imagined there never existed any question of this.—Ed.]

CHURCH-BUILDING INTELLIGENCE, &c.

Salford New Church.—This church will be in the Decorated style of Gothic architecture, which prevailed in England in the 13th and 14th centuries, the fine churches of Housden, Selby, and Newark, being the models principally studied in the preparation of the design. It stands on a commanding site, adjacent to one of the principal entrances to the town; the streets being wide, and the ground around the site level and open. The interior length is 130 feet, of which the chancel occupies 28 feet, the nave and transept 102 feet, the transept from north to south 99 feet, the nave 24 feet wide, the aisles, including the pillars, 17 feet. There will be a clerestory lighted with coupled windows of two lights, and a triforium passage in the thickness of the wall; the nave is shortened by the want of space, but there are instances of cross churches of equal size, as at Rotherham, where the nave is still shorter. The west, or principal front, is divided by four massive buttresses, crowned by open tabernacles of beautiful design; the great window is 40 feet high; the apse of the west door is 5 feet deep; the west wall is 5 feet thick, and we may here remark that the entire structure is of stone, built in the ancient manner; the nave is approached by a north porch, the site not admitting this important portion of the church on the south side. The organ will be placed over the screen, which separates the north transept of the church from the nave. The tower and spire, which are supported on four massive pillars of solid stone, rise to the height of 225 feet; the tower is lighted with coupled windows, having a gabled pediment with niches, in which are placed the twelve apostles, three on each front. The tower is 30 feet square; the spire has four angles of Louvre windows with crocketed gables, the whole surmounted by a cross and vane. The eastern end of the chancel will be occupied by a window of seven lights, 18 feet wide and 45 feet high, in which it is proposed to depict the genealogy of our Lord on the roof of Jesse. It is also proposed that the west window shall be occupied by subjects relating to the life of the patron saint. The whole interior will be painted and gilded in the ancient manner, for which purpose a design has been furnished by Mr. Taylor Bulmer. Mr. Benjamin Hollins, of Sheffield, is the builder; and the architects Messrs. Weightman and Hadfield, of that town.

Rochliffe St. Mary's Church.—This church has been erected and in great part endowed at the expense of Andrew Lawson, Esq., M.P., aided by contributions towards the endowment by Mrs. Lawrence, of Studley Park, and other benevolent persons, for the use of the inhabitants of Rochliffe, distant two miles from the ancient parish of Aldborough. It is 50 feet long, 22 feet wide, and 24 feet high, and contains sittings for 150 persons. It is entirely built and vaulted with stone from Mr. Lawson's own quarry, and from those of C. Duncroft, Esq., of Copgrove. The chancel and steps leading up to it are paved with marble from near the altar of York Minster, with some necessary additions. The vestry-door is also a relic of the same edifice, rescued from the disastrous fire of 1829. The scroll panels of the wainscot of the chancel are from Nun Monkton Priory. The cover of the font is copied from one in Charlton-on-Otmore Church, near Oxford. The pulpit is that from which Isaac Milner and John Scott preached in the church of the Holy Trinity at Hull. The fabric has been built from the designs and under the direction of Messrs. Sharp, architects, of York.

Royal Donations.—Among the Queen Adelaide's numerous donations and benefactions we have to mention that her Majesty has been pleased to transmit 30*l.* to the fund now forming for the erection of a church, a parsonage-house, and village school-room, on the moor, near Woodhall Spa, in Lincolnshire; 25 guineas towards the erection of a new church at Kingsclere, near Newbury; and 20*l.* in aid of the fund for rebuilding the ancient parish church of Bednall, Staffordshire.

Munificent Bequest for the purpose of Church Restoration.—It is said that the sum of 6,000*l.* has lately, by a bequest, been placed at the disposal of the Cambridge Camden Society, for the purpose of restoring old churches.